THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): Some of the steps taken to promote exports of industrial produce include incentives under the Exim Policy like Duty Exemption Scheme, Duty Entitlement Passbook Scheme, Duty Drawback Scheme, assistance from Market Development Fund, reduction in interest rate on export credit, facility of legal undertaking in lieu of Bank Guarantee to manufacture exporters, exemption from special additional duty on all export promotion schemes.

Some of the steps taken/proposed tc be taken specifically for enhancement of exports of agricultural and processed food products include:

1. Providing assistance for raising small and large nurseries for production of good quality planting material upgradation of technical knowhow of farmers through demonstrations, trainings and publicity, rejuvenation of old orchards, area expansion, supply of minikits for vegetables, improving productivity and training of farmers.
2. Provision of soft loans for setting up of grading/processing centres, auction platforms, ripening/curing chambers and quality testing equipment.
3. Providing financial assistance to exporters/growers/Cooperative Societies for development of infrastructural facilities such as purcahse of specialised transport units, establishment of pre-cooling/could storage facilities, integrated post-harvest handing systems (pack houses).
4. Grant of financial assistance for improved packaging, strengthening of quality control and modernization of processing units.
5. Establishment of vapour heat treatment facilties for improving the acceptability of the product expecially the mangoes in overseas markets.
6. Grant of Air Freight Subsidy for exports of floricultural items and selected fresh fruits and vegetables and fruits.
7. Arranging promotional campaigns such as buyer-seller meets and participation in important international fairs and exhibitions.
8. Setting up of integrated cargo handling and cold storage facilities at various international Airporst for handing export of perishable items such as fresh fruits and vegetables.
9. Providing assistance in development of data and dissemination of market information.
10. Providing assistance for setting up of laboratories for testing of products to ensure quality, technology transfer, process upgradation and product development.

Export of Rice

1554. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) how much rice was exported from India during 1996-97, 1997-98 and 1998-99 and the foreign exchange earned;

(b) whether export of rice will not effect the prices of rice locally;

(c) what are the incentives provided for export of rice;

(d) who are the major competitors for rice export, besides Pakistan; and

(e) which are the countries who are importing rice from India?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHANA HEGDE): (a) The total quantity and value of Basmati and Non-basmati rice exported during 1996-97, 1997-98 and 1998-99 (Apr.-Sept, 98) are as follows:

Quantity lakh MTs
Value in Rs. Lakhs

Year	Basmati		Non-Basmati	
	Quantity	Value	Quantity	Value
1996-97	5.23	124764	19.89	192472
1997-98	5.82	167435	17.22	160038
1998-99 (Apr.-Sept, 98)	3.13	94639	16.93	166836
1997-98 (Apr.-Sept.)	2.81	76387	6.90	67074

(Source: DGCI&S, Calcutta)

(b) It is not possible to accurately assess the likely effect exports of rice would have on the prices of rice in the domestic market, as the exports of rice would depend upon international demand and supply position, international and domestic prices, consumer preferences, and other terms of trade.

(c) Some of the steps taken to enhance exports of rice include, inter-alia conducting publicity campaigns, sending delegations abroad, participating in International trade fairs, inviting potential buyers and providing financial assistance to exporters for improving quality, packaging, brand promotion of products and for conducting market surveys.

(d) The major competitors for rice export, besides Pakistan are Thailand, USA, Vietnam and Myanmar.

(e) Some of the countries which import rice from India are Saudi Arabia, UAE, UK, Kuwait, Bangladesh, Sri Lanks South Africa, Russia, Nigeria and Somalia.

Black-Listing of Indian Companies by USA

1555. SHRI SANJAY NIRUPAM: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to take up the issue of U.S. Government's decision to black-list more than two hundred Indian establishments for doing business;

(b) whether this issue has been taken up with U.S. Government during last round to talks held in Rome from 19th November, 1998;

(c) if so, the details in this regard; and

(d) the details of the steps taken to meet the situation?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) to (d) The US Administration announced on 13th November, 1998 a list of Indian entities which will be covered by export restrictions. The Government of India issued a statement on November 14, 1998 that this as a highly unfortunate development. These restrictions interfere with the free flow of trade, technology & finance and have an adverse impact on mutually beneficial business interaction. This decision reflects the continuation of a coercive approach that is entirely misplaced and counter-productive. Such steps are unhelpful for meaningful discussions towards an improvement in bilateral relations, which is desired by both countries.

The sixth round of ongoing bilateral discussions between Union Minister for External Affairs and Deputy Chairman of